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Letter dated 5 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached statement made by the Prime Minister, Theresa May, to Parliament on 5 September 2018 concerning the investigation into the attack in Salisbury on 4 March 2018 (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dame Karen **Pierce**

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Annex to the letter dated 5 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement made by the Prime Minister, Theresa May, to Parliament on 5 September 2018 concerning the Salisbury investigation

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on the investigation into the attempted murder of Sergey and Yulia Skripal — and the subsequent poisoning of Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley earlier this year.

This was a sickening and despicable act in which a devastatingly toxic nerve agent — known as Novichok — was used to attack our country. It left four people fighting for their lives and one innocent woman dead. And I know the thoughts of the whole House will be with the family of Dawn Sturgess in particular, following their tragic loss.

In March I set out for the House why the government concluded that the Russian State was culpable for the attempted murder of Mr Skripal and his daughter.

I also said that — while we all share a sense of impatience to bring those responsible to justice — as a nation that believes in the rule of law we would give the police the space and time to carry out their investigation properly.

Since then around 250 detectives have trawled through more than 11,000 hours of CCTV and taken more than 1,400 statements.

Working around the clock they have carried out painstaking and methodical work to ascertain exactly which individuals were responsible and the methods they used to carry out this attack.

Mr Speaker, this forensic investigation has now produced sufficient evidence for the independent Director of Public Prosecutions to bring charges against two Russian nationals for:

- the conspiracy to murder Sergei Skripal;
- the attempted murder of Sergei and Yulia Skripal and Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey;
- the use and possession of Novichok; and
- causing grievous bodily harm with intent to Yulia Skripal and Nick Bailey.

This morning, the police have set out how the two Russian nationals travelled under the names of Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov — names the police believe to be aliases.

They arrived at Gatwick Airport at 3pm on Friday 2nd March, having flown from Moscow on flight SU2588.

They travelled by train to London Victoria, then on to Waterloo before going to the City Stay Hotel in Bow Road East London.

They stayed there on both Friday and Saturday evenings — and traces of Novichok were found in their hotel room.

On Saturday 3rd March they visited Salisbury, arriving at approximately 2.25pm and leaving less than two hours later, at 4.10pm. The police are confident this was for reconnaissance of the Salisbury area.

On Sunday 4th March they made the same journey, travelling by underground from Bow to Waterloo station at approximately 8.05am, before continuing by train to Salisbury.

The police have today released CCTV footage of the two men which clearly places them in the immediate vicinity of the Skripals' house at 11.58am, which the police say was moments before the attack.

They left Salisbury and returned to Waterloo arriving at approximately 4.45pm and boarded the underground at approximately 6.30pm to Heathrow — from where they returned to Moscow on flight SU2585, departing at 10.30pm.

Mr Speaker, this hard evidence has enabled the independent Crown Prosecution Service to conclude they have a sufficient basis on which to bring charges against these two men for the attack in Salisbury.

The same two men are now also the prime suspects in the case of Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley too.

There is no other line of inquiry beyond this.

And the police have today formally linked the attack on the Skripals and the events in Amesbury — such that it now forms one investigation.

There are good reasons for doing so.

Our own analysis, together with yesterday's report from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, has confirmed that the exact same chemical nerve agent was used in both cases.

There is no evidence to suggest that Dawn and Charlie may have been deliberately targeted, but rather were victims of the reckless disposal of this agent.

The police have today released further details of the small glass counterfeit perfume bottle and box discovered in Charlie Rowley's house which was found to contain this nerve agent.

And the manner in which the bottle was modified leaves no doubt it was a cover for smuggling the weapon into the country, and for the delivery method for the attack against the Skripals' front door.

Mr Speaker, the police investigation into the poisoning of Dawn and Charlie is ongoing and the police are today appealing for further information. But were these two suspects within our jurisdiction there would be a clear basis in law for their arrest for murder.

Mr Speaker, we repeatedly asked Russia to account for what happened in Salisbury in March, and they have replied with obfuscation and lies.

This has included trying to pass the blame for this attack onto terrorists, onto our international partners, and even onto the future mother-in-law of Yulia Skripal.

They even claimed that I, myself, invented Novichok.

Their attempts to hide the truth by pushing out a deluge of disinformation simply reinforces their culpability.

As we made clear in March, only Russia had the technical means, operational experience and motive to carry out the attack.

Novichok nerve agents were developed by the Soviet Union in the 1980s under a programme codenamed FOLIANT.

Within the past decade Russia has produced and stockpiled small quantities of these agents, long after it signed the Chemical Weapons Convention.

And during the 2000s, Russia commenced a programme to test means of delivering nerve agents including by application to door handles.

We were right to say in March that the Russian State was responsible.

And now we have identified the individuals involved, we can go even further.

Mr Speaker, just as the police investigation has enabled the CPS to bring charges against the two suspects, so the Security and Intelligence Agencies have carried out their own investigations into the organisation behind this attack.

Based on this work, I can today tell the House that, based on a body of intelligence, the Government has concluded that the two individuals named by the police and CPS are officers from the Russian military intelligence service, also known as the GRU.

The GRU is a highly disciplined organisation with a well-established chain of command.

So this was not a rogue operation. It was almost certainly also approved outside the GRU at a senior level of the Russian state.

Mr Speaker, the House will appreciate that I cannot go into details about the work of our security and intelligence agencies. But we will be briefing Opposition leaders and others on Privy Council terms and also giving further detail to the Intelligence and Security Committee.

Let me turn to our response to this appalling attack and the further knowledge we now have about those responsible.

First, with respect to the two individuals, as the Crown Prosecution Service and Police announced earlier today, we have obtained a European Arrest Warrant and will shortly issue an Interpol red notice.

Of course, Russia has repeatedly refused to allow its nationals to stand trial overseas, citing a bar on extradition in its constitution.

So, as we found following the murder of Alexander Litvinenko, any formal extradition request in this case would be futile.

But should either of these individuals ever again travel outside Russia, we will take every possible step to detain them, to extradite them and to bring them to face justice here in the United Kingdom.

Mr Speaker, this chemical weapons attack on our soil was part of a wider pattern of Russian behaviour that persistently seeks to undermine our security and that of our allies around the world.

They have fomented conflict in the Donbas, illegally annexed Crimea, repeatedly violated the national airspace of several European countries and mounted a sustained campaign of cyber espionage and election interference.

They were behind a violent attempted coup in Montenegro. And a Russian-made missile, launched from territory held by Russian-backed separatists, brought down MH17.

We must step up our collective effort to protect ourselves in response to this threat — and that is exactly what we have done since the attack in March, both domestically and collectively with our allies.

We have introduced a new power to detain people at the UK border to determine whether they are engaged in hostile state activity.

We have introduced the Magnitsky amendment to the Sanctions and Money Laundering Act in response to the violation of human rights. And we have radically stepped up our activity against illicit finance entering our country.

We also expelled 23 Russian diplomats who had been identified as undeclared Russian intelligence officers, fundamentally degrading Russian intelligence capability in the UK for years to come.

And in collective solidarity — and in recognition of the shared threat posed to our allies — 28 other countries as well as NATO joined us in expelling a total of over 150 Russian intelligence officers: the largest collective expulsion ever.

Since then, the EU agreed a comprehensive package to tackle hybrid threats.

The G7 agreed a Rapid Response Mechanism to share intelligence on hostile state activity.

NATO has substantially strengthened its collective deterrence, including through a new Cyber Operations Centre.

And the US has announced additional sanctions against Russia for the Salisbury attack.

Mr Speaker, our allies acted in good faith — and the painstaking work of our police and intelligence agencies over the last six months further reinforces that they were right to do so.

Together, we will continue to show that those who attempt to undermine the international rules based system cannot act with impunity.

We will continue to press for all of the measures agreed so far to be fully implemented, including the creation of a new EU Chemical Weapons sanctions regime.

But we will not stop there.

We will also push for new EU sanctions regimes against those responsible for cyber-attacks and gross human rights violations — and for new listings under the existing regime against Russia.

And we will work with our partners to empower the OPCW to attribute chemical weapons attacks to other states beyond Syria.

Most significantly, Mr Speaker, what we have learnt from today's announcement is the specific nature of the threat from the Russian GRU.

We know that the GRU has played a key part in malign Russian activity in recent years.

And today we have exposed their role behind the despicable chemical weapons attack on the streets of Salisbury.

The actions of the GRU are a threat to all our allies and to all our citizens.

And on the basis of what we have learnt in the Salisbury investigation — and what we know about this organisation more broadly — we must now step up our collective efforts, specifically against the GRU.

We are increasing our understanding of what the GRU is doing in our countries, shining a light on their activities, exposing their methods and sharing them with our allies, just as we have done with Salisbury.

And, Mr Speaker, while the House will appreciate that I cannot go into details, together with our allies we will deploy the full range of tools from across our National Security apparatus in order to counter the threat posed by the GRU.

I have said before, and I say again now, that the UK has no quarrel with the Russian people.

And we continue to hold out hope that we will one day once again enjoy a strong partnership with the Government of this great nation.

As a fellow Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, we will continue to engage Russia on topics of international peace and security.

But we will also use these channels of communication to make clear there can be no place in any civilised international order for the kind of barbaric activity which we saw in Salisbury in March.

Finally, Mr Speaker let me pay tribute to the fortitude of the people of Salisbury, Amesbury and the surrounding areas, who have faced such disruption to their daily lives over the past six months.

Let me once again thank the outstanding efforts of the emergency services and National Health Service in responding to these incidents.

And let me thank all those involved in the police and intelligence community for their tireless and painstaking work which has led to today's announcement.

Mr Speaker, back in March, Russia sought to sow doubt and uncertainty about the evidence we presented to this House — and some were minded to believe them.

Today's announcement shows that we were right.

We were right to act against the Russian State in the way we did. And we are right now to step up our efforts against the GRU.

We will not tolerate such barbaric acts against our country.

And — together with our allies — this government will continue to do whatever is necessary to keep our people safe.

And I commend this statement to the house.